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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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2 1. An audiovisual system for making audiovisual programs available to a
3 user from a broadcast source and from local storage and for presenting on a display
4 device a first available audiovisual program selected from the available audiovisual
5 programs, the audiovisual system comprising:

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6 a disk drive adapted to receive and store audiovisual programs and to
7 retrieve and transmit stored audiovisual programs;

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8 a preference determination module responsive to user input and
9 electronic program guide information to estimate a degree of interest by the user
10 for each available audiovisual program;

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11 an alert module coupled to the preference determination module, the alert
12 module generating an interrupt signal in response to the degrees of interest of the
13 available audiovisual programs; and

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14 a system controller coupled to the alert module, the system controller
15 responsive to user input and electronic program guide information to present the
16 first available audiovisual program to the user, and responsive to the interrupt
17 signal from the alert module to interrupt presenting the first available
18 audiovisual program to provide information to the user regarding at least a
19 second available audiovisual program.

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2 2. The audiovisual system of Claim 1, wherein the system controller is
3 further responsive to the interrupt signal to pause presenting the first available
4 audiovisual program.

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2 3. The audiovisual system of Claim 1, wherein the first available
3 audiovisual program is a stored audiovisual program.

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2 4. The audiovisual system of Claim 1, wherein the first available
3 audiovisual program is a broadcasted audiovisual program received from the broadcast
4 source and the system controller is further responsive to the interrupt signal to store the
5 first available audiovisual program on the disk drive while providing information to the
6 user regarding the available audiovisual program.

1 5. The audiovisual system of Claim 1, wherein the available audiovisual
2 programs comprise broadcasted audiovisual programs available to be received from the
3 broadcast source within a predetermined time window and stored audiovisual programs.

1 6. The audiovisual system of Claim 1, wherein the alert module is further
2 responsive to user input to generate at least one threshold interest criterion, whereby the
3 interrupt signal is not transmitted to the system controller unless the degree of interest
4 for an available audiovisual program satisfies the threshold interest criterion.

1 7. The audiovisual system of Claim 1, wherein the alert module generates
2 the interrupt signal in response to the degree of interest of the first available audiovisual
3 program.

1 8. The audiovisual system of Claim 7, wherein the estimated degree of
2 interest of the second available audiovisual program is higher than the estimated degree
3 of interest of the first available audiovisual program.

1 9. The audiovisual system of Claim 1, wherein the system controller is
2 further responsive to user input to continue presenting the first available audiovisual
3 program to the user.

1 10. The audiovisual system of Claim 1, wherein the system controller is
2 further responsive to user input to begin presenting the second available audiovisual
3 program to the user.

1 11. The audiovisual system of Claim 10, wherein the system controller is
2 further responsive to user input to store the first available audiovisual program on the
3 disk drive.

1 12. The audiovisual system of Claim 10, wherein the system controller is
2 further responsive to user input to store a third available audiovisual program on the
3 disk drive.

1 13. A method of allowing a user to select among available audiovisual
2 programs while viewing a first audiovisual program on a display device coupled to an
3 audiovisual system, the method comprising:

4 presenting the first audiovisual program to the user;
5 generating at least one threshold interest criterion;

6 estimating a degree of interest by the user for the first audiovisual
7 program and each available audiovisual program;

8 comparing the degree of interest for each available audiovisual program
9 with the threshold interest criterion; and

10 presenting information to the user regarding at least a second available
11 audiovisual program which has a degree of interest which satisfies the threshold
12 interest criterion.

1 14. The method of Claim 13, further comprising pausing the presentation of
2 the first audiovisual program to the user.

1 15. The method of Claim 14, wherein pausing the presentation of the first
2 audiovisual program to the user comprises storing the first audiovisual program.

1 16. The method of Claim 13, wherein the first audiovisual program is a
2 stored audiovisual program retrieved from a disk drive of the audiovisual system.

1 17. The method of Claim 13, wherein the first audiovisual program is a
2 broadcasted audiovisual program received from a broadcast source, and the method
3 further comprises storing the first audiovisual program while presenting information to
4 the user.

1 18. The method of Claim 13, wherein the available audiovisual programs
2 comprise broadcasted audiovisual programs available to be received from the broadcast
3 source within a predetermined time window and stored audiovisual programs.

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